

# Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan

## Transportation Focus Group

June 6<sup>th</sup> @ 3pm

Meeting Notes

### Attendees:

- Amanda Poncy, City of Charlottesville Bike & Pedestrian Planner
- Wood Hudson, MPO Transportation Program Manager
- Stephen Johnson, JAUNT
- Brennen Duncan, City of Charlottesville Traffic Engineer
- Wesley Kern, CAT
- Alisa Hefner, Think Tank
- Will Cockrell, TJPDC
- Nick Morrison, TJPDC

### Discussion:

Nick opened the discussion by introducing the small area plan process and giving some contextual background on the project and what the aim of the afternoon's meeting was. He passed out the question sheet composed of questions sent in by Think Tank members and identified by staff.

### What are the possible solutions to address safety concerns at the intersection of 7 ½ St. and Cherry Ave?

- Amanda wanted to know what the specific concerns were. Were they related more to bike and pedestrian connectivity? She added that the City installed rapid flashing beacons and bump outs in the past to address some pedestrian concerns.
- Alisa said that when driving, it feels tight and the turning movement is tight and that sight distance concerns existed. She said that there are speed issues from turning and that a telephone pole in the sidewalk is an issue. She noted that some people use 7 ½ St. as a cut-through and that people trying to cross Cherry are vulnerable due to the curve in the road at the intersection and the speed of cross-traffic. She wondered if the pedestrian crossing across Cherry could be shortened.
- Brennen said that the left-turn lanes may not be needed but that traffic volumes along Cherry may have warranted the turn lanes during peak travel times to reduce backups from people trying to make the turn.
- Amanda said that she had heard concerns over fencing and vegetation at the intersection, but that there were difficulties with zoning enforcing fence height.
- Brennen added that reducing cut-through traffic by only allowing left or right turns out of 7 ½ St. could impact residents who may use the road as a cut-through.
- Stephen asked if it could be a one-way going southbound.
- Brennen said that at peak travel times, people are going to use the shortest route possible and will figure out cut-throughs.
- Stephen asked if there were any City-wide transportation goals that could address some concerns.

- Amanda answered that the City is in the process of updating the comprehensive plan and that some more general issues may be addressed. Brennen added that there was nothing real specific. Wood added that regionally it is more high-level.
- Amanda noted that pulling VDOT crash data would allow the group to see if there were actual safety issues at the intersection or if they were perceived.
- Alisa asked what the process would be for addressing the left-turn there. Brennen said that a traffic study would need to be done but that the neighborhood wants the hotel to be open so they can see how it would affect traffic. He also said that a turning movement count could be done at that intersection now to determine if the left turn lane is needed.

**How can the neighborhood have better bus stop infrastructure on Cherry Ave (specifically in reference to the bus stop at Kim’s Market)?**

- Wesley said that when funding comes in CAT tries to put infrastructure in a the most used stops. He added that there were 135 boardings at that stop in a one-month period. He said routes with higher ridership numbers get priority for infrastructure improvements.
- Alisa said that the stop is at a crosswalk and drivers don’t always stop and wondered what the process would be for relocating the stop a little further down.
- Wesley said that CAT tries to group any changes into an annual rotation so that GPS information can be updated together but that moving the stop wouldn’t be too much of a challenge, they would just need to make sure there were no utility lines to contend with and that the property owners would be ok with the move.
- Will asked how much a bus shelter costs. Wesley said they run about 6-7 thousand, but with a concrete pad, that number is closer to \$10,000.
- Alisa wondered about just installing a bench there. Wesley said that CAT has several semi-seats (a pole with a blue seat on either side) in stock that could be used.

**Safety concerns at the small strip development with La Flor Michoacana and New York Fashions, in regards to the entrances and exits to the lot**

- Brennen was not sure on the solution, short of redesigning the entire site.
- Alisa wondered if painting could help. Brennen answered that since it is private property, it would be hard to enforce.
- Will said that there was confusion with the sidewalk and curb cuts there.
- Brennen said that if this was a new site, they would look at egress and ingress to be done differently, but since this was an existing business changes would be hard to impose.
- Alisa asked if the sidewalk on the corner be curbed. Brennen answered that there would have to be extensive conversations with the business owners because removing access points can be a point of contention with owners.
- Brennen said that a painted one-way arrow may help.

**Speed limit concerns on Cherry Ave and would it be feasible to drop the speed limit down to 25 and what tools were available to combat speeding traffic.**

- Brennen said that a speed or traffic study would need to be conducted.
- Wesley noted that on-time performance for Route 4 (the route that includes Cherry) is difficult to maintain due to traffic and that not having a bus come at predictable times can impact ridership. He said that if the speed limit was lowered, on-time performance would decrease and impact CAT schedules.
- Wood said that a lot of the congestion is likely a result of intersection points.

- Brennen said that a lot of the traffic is hospital traffic.
- Stephen asked if there would be safety data tied to speed. Brennen said it would be.
- Brennen added that width perception of the street influences speed.
- Amanda said that on-street parking along other City streets may have reduced the speed to 25. She added that the hill from Ridge down to Cherry would make lowering the speed difficult.
- Wood added that in absence of enforcement, speed reductions are not effective.

**What are the current bus ridership levels in and around Cherry? How does that compare to others?**

- See ridership attachment

**Discussion on JAUNT service in Fifeville**

- Stephen said that there is JAUNT collaboration with CAT, particularly on park-n-ride lots and commuter routes to reduce congestion.
- Will asked how many Fifeville riders JAUNT has. Stephen said that he would look into the data.
- Wood asked how many routes JAUNT has through Fifeville and how many movements they have through the corridor.
- Alisa asked if there were any fixed-route services from JAUNT in Fifeville. Stephen said that there were none, it is all on-demand.
- Amanda added that the Independent Resource Center is located on Cherry and JAUNT likely serves them.
- Brennen asked if JAUNT busses use GPS to track their movements. Stephen said they did.

**Would reducing the cost of CAT service significantly impact things?**

- Wesley said that fares make up about 7% of CAT's operating costs so the service is already heavily subsidized. CAT service is cheap compared to other transit providers in cities of similar size. The free trolley, the highest ridership route, is a free route. Wesley said that it would be tough to see if dropping fares would impact ridership.
- Wesley added that there needs to be a 10-15-minute lead time (time between busses) to increase bus ridership. He said that the smart card is \$22 a month for unlimited rides. He noted that the CAT's Transit Development Plan (TDP) is still underway and that could show where to alter bus routes.

**What are the traffic projections for the corridor?**

- Wood said that the MPO is working on 2045 level of service projections for the region, Cherry will be included.
- Brennen added that Cherry is already at capacity, so that even if the model predicts an increase, it likely won't given Cherry is already at capacity for handling traffic.
- Brennen added that they factor in a .2% annual growth rate for traffic and a .1% growth rate for bike and pedestrian.
- Brennen said that level of service is scored on an A-F scoring. An A level would be a multi-lane (6 or more) of free-flowing traffic. That is not what we are shooting for on Cherry, so a C or a D level of service is ideal.
- Brennen mentioned the Smart Scale application for Cherry, Ridge, and 5<sup>th</sup> St intersection that will aim to address safety and congestion concerns.
- Wesley said that CAT drivers complain about being blinded by headlights at that intersection due to the steep grade.

**How has the elimination of a turn-lane on Cherry from a few years ago impact service?**

- Amanda said that the turn lane was just removed in front of the Salvation Army and that removing it does not increase bottlenecks
- Will asked if there were any other bike or pedestrian projects going on in the area. Amanda said that Monticello and Ridge would get bike boxes and a continuation of the bike lane along Monticello. She said that they had looked at 9<sup>th</sup> St. but parking removal would be required for any improvement there. She also noted that the intersection of Forest Hills, 9<sup>th</sup>, and Prospect has been a concern of the neighborhood and that Toole Design Group, a City consultant, had recommended a traffic circle.

# CAT - April Boarding Counts

165,666

Number	Name	Route	Boardings	Total
12987	Ridge St @ Cherry (north corner)	2	84	270
		03 A	37	
		03 B	6	
		04 A	79	
		04 B	22	
		04 C	42	
15894	Cherry Ave @ 6th ST SW (towards hospital)	04 A	82	135
		04 B	32	
		04 C	21	
15904	Cherry Ave @ the Independence Ctr (towards hospital)	04 A	14	28
		04 B	11	
		04 C	3	
19444	Roosevelt Brown Blvd @ Grove St (towards hospital)	04 A	63	172
		04 B	30	
		04 C	14	
		6	65	
19437	Roosevelt Brown Blvd @ King St (away from hospital)	04 A	4	19
		04 B	5	
		04 C	2	
		6	8	
19428	Cherry Ave @ 10th St SW (away from hospital)	04 A	29	35
		04 B	5	
		04 C	1	
14547	Cherry Ave @ 10th St SW (towards hospital)	04 A	29	59
		04 B	28	
		04 C	2	
11585	Cherry Ave @ Cherry Ave Shop Ctr (away from hospital)	04 A	60	85
		04 B	15	
		04 C	10	
12113	Cherry Ave @ 6th St SW (away from hospital)	04 A	2	3
		04 B	1	
15802	Ridge St @ Elliott Ave (east corner)	03 A	44	60
		03 B	1	
		04 A	6	
		04 B	5	
		04 C	4	
12956	5th St SW @ Bailey Rd (southbound)	2	217	263
		03 A	38	
		03 B	8	
11563	Bailey Rd @ Prospect Ave (towards hospital)	6	429	429
11571	Prospect Ave @ the Blue Ridge Commons (towards hospital)	6	695	695
19266	9th St SW @ Buford Middle School (towards hospital)	6	46	46
17426	9th St SW @ Buford Middle School (away from hospital)	6	104	104
19278	Prospect Ave @ the Blue Ridge Commons (away from hospital)	6	288	288
19284	Bailey Rd @ Prospect Ave (away from hospital)	6	28	28
15792	5th St SW @ Bailey Rd (northbound)	03 A	71	83
		03 B	12	
17636	Cherry Ave @ Hanover St (away from hospital)	04 A	3	6
		04 B	3	
14534	Cherry Ave @ Hanover St (towards hospital)	04 A	229	402
		04 B	106	
		04 C	67	

# Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan

## Transportation Focus Group

June 13<sup>th</sup> @ 10 AM

### Meeting Notes

#### **Attendees:**

- Dr. Eric Irizarry, Principal CHS
- Summer Thompson, Principal Johnson Elementary
- Justin Malone, Principal Jackson-Via
- Carmelita Wood, Think Tank
- Sarah Malpass, Think Tank
- Nick Morrison, TJPDC

#### **Discussion:**

Nick opened the discussion by introducing the small area plan process and giving some contextual background on the project and what the aim of the meeting was. He then handed discussion over to Sarah so she could provide information on how the neighborhood initiated the small area plan process.

#### **Describe some of the challenges that your students face.**

- Justin opened by saying that it is a challenge for students to have healthy activities to engage with in the community. There is the Boys and Girls Club, but it tends to have a pretty loose structure. Students need more experiences to engage with.
- Summer said that the lack of affordable housing and the struggle to find reliable and affordable childcare is one of the issues her students face. If there are few opportunities after school, children will just roam freely unsupervised. Parents who have to work may find it difficult to find the time to provide transportation to existing after school options as well.
- Justin- after students leave school they need to engage with others and the community to foster a sense of belonging.
- Sarah noted that there is a premium on parents' time and other life pressures that make finding structured care difficult.
- Carmelita added that there aren't many transportation options open to the community to get students to the afterschool programs.
- Summer added that the bus schedule is not always reliable.
- Eric said there was a need to get more kids participating in programs at the high school. He said it can also be a challenge to get parents involved.

#### **How do the schools work with the community, beyond teaching children?**

- Summer said that there is an afterschool program city-wide at all of the schools called EBL. However, there is a waiting making it challenging to get students into the program. The cost is calculated on a sliding scale, but some families still may not be able to afford the program.
- Summer added that the schools do offer busses to the Boys and Girls Club, which why a lot of families choose that option, but for some that is the only option.

- Justin added that the mixed-age groups at the Boys and Girls Club can be difficult and that the program was starting to get a bad reputation.
- Justin noted that he had received feedback from a number of sources that there was concern about safety at the Boys and Girls Club
- Justin talked about the YCAAP program and that they cover transportation
- Summer said that it would be great if there was a space for an afterschool program along Cherry. She would be willing to offer YCAAP space but the school division rejected the idea.
- Sarah asked if they needed funding.
- Justin answered that he didn't think so, they were just look for a space.

#### **What other community activities occur at the schools?**

- Justin said that UVA has held a couple of club meetings at the school, like an astronomy club and French club, scheduled around the EBL schedule. He noted that the schools are looking to continue to find interest-based and experience-based programming for the students.
- Sarah asked if students who live in Greenstone are participating in these programs.
- Justin said they may have greater success with other clubs
- Eric added that having transportation in place helps
- Summer said that the EBL program is the main activity

#### **How can the project team continue to engage with the school community?**

- Justin said that his staff would be happy to assist with discussions with faculty and have on-going discussions around opportunities for students.
- Eric added that CHS is available to use for events
- Summer recommended getting in contact with the neighborhood center at Greenstone
- Justin recommended Velvet Coleman, a family engagement specialist for the school division.
- Sarah asked if there were any programs geared toward Latino students and how we could connect with them. Summer was not aware of any.
- Carmelita asked how the neighborhood association could help. Justin said that he would like to hear what the neighborhood's thoughts were and would be curious to hear their feedback.
- Eric said that the City lacks afterschool programming, staff met with community leaders but there is not enough space or funding for more opportunities for teenagers. If students aren't engaged at school there isn't much going on for them to plug into.

Sarah pulled up the Visioning Report to show the group the matrix identified by the neighborhood association. She shared some of the desires of the community and discussion followed.

- Justin said that the Music Resource Center was very popular and that schools want kids in the building.
- Sarah and Summer both agreed that there needs to be more community space.
- Summer thought that the idea of visual preservation of history, like a walking tour, was a great idea and would foster a sense of belonging for students. She added that honoring and promoting history was extremely important and she didn't want Fifeville to become a neighborhood that people were driven from.
- Justin asked what types of programming would go into a community center.
- Sarah asked how we could let kids know they belong.
- Summer added that she would love to see alternative afterschool options, and very few options exist for very young children.
- Sarah noted the Ready Kids program at Greenstone.



# Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan

Front Porch Discussion: 1109 Forest Hills Ave

June 6<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm

Meeting Notes

## Attendees:

- Willow
- Nancy
- Jack
- Jean
- Deborah

## Discussion:

Willow opened the discussion by presenting the article that was written in the Daily Progress about development along Cherry and how the small area plan process could address potential challenges. Nick added some background information on the small area plan process and what some of the goals of the evenings meeting were.

Discussion turned to neighborhood concerns

Jean discussed the UVA Health Center E.R. expansion and its encroachment on the neighborhood. She was concerned that increased helicopter traffic could inundate the neighborhood and that pilots were not paying attention to ethics of flying over neighborhoods.

Willow added that there had been a history of people coming through the neighborhood asking for money, with Jean and Jack echoing those concerns. Willow said that panhandling can be a problem and that we could look to ways to address those concerns.

Deborah said that when her family moved in there was a lot of drug activity, especially in the park and that the current panhandling is an improvement over what she saw in the past.

Jean added that after discussions with police officers, they have told neighbors that it is more of a perception problem than an actual crim problem.

Willow said that two police officers have knocked on her door to introduce themselves and that they are getting out in the community, which was beneficial.

Jean mentioned that parking is an issue, and that the police have not been out in the neighborhood on foot and that she has not had many friendly encounters with them and that they don't have a real grasp on what is going on in the community and how it is changing. She added that she would like to see more friendly officers.

The group then began discussing how the neighborhood has changed over time.

Jack said that he believes the neighborhood is changing for the better.

Deborah added that there is now more owner-occupied housing.

Jean shared that there are still quite a few rentals in the area and that is contributing to increasing pressures for parking, since more people are living in the homes and have more cars than a typical family might. She also added that UVA cannot accommodate its staff with parking so they are parking in the neighborhood. She also shared concerns regarding Air BNB rentals and parking issues related to guests not knowing where to park and blocking driveways.

Deborah said that some people have trouble accessing the park because there is not enough parking on-site after the renovated the park a while ago.

Jean discussed possible multi-use buildings along Cherry Ave and how they would contribute to increased levels of traffic.

Deborah said that the neighborhood needs a supermarket or grocery store, at a smaller scale than typical grocery stores.

Nancy added that the model of Lidl or Aldi may be a good fit for the neighborhood.

Deborah wanted to look more into how many Air BNB's are in the neighborhood.

Jack added that they are causing more cars and increased levels of traffic.

Nancy said that there needs to be an increased speeding fine to deter speeds.

Willow said that the park is a huge draw and that it is packed in the summer months but many people have to drive to it, creating traffic concerns on neighborhood streets.

Jack asked if maybe speed humps could be installed to slow drivers.

Discussion then turned to what attendees would like to see for the future of the Cherry Ave corridor.

Jack said that he wanted it to stay the same.

Deborah added that she would not like to see tall buildings.

Jean said that she thought the look of the new Marriott hotel was nice.

Jack talked about the high levels of traffic on Cherry.

Willow asked what was going on on Grove St. and the property that UVA owns.

Jean said that development is going to occur no matter what, but that parking needs should be considered so that people aren't parking in the neighborhoods.

Willow said that she does not want Fifeville to be like Belmont and that it needs its own identity.

Discussion turned to what attracted attendees to Fifeville.

Willow said that she could afford the house and that she would stay here into retirement.

Deborah echoed Willow's affordability statement and added that her children could walk to school and would not need to take a bus. She also said that the yard and creek on her property were big draws for her and that her children and now grandchildren enjoyed playing in the creek.

Jack said that he liked the wide streets and that he could afford the house. He also liked that there was no homeowner's association. He also liked the convenient location of the neighborhood and that he had a driveway.

Jean added that she likes Jack's side of the street because they have driveways and they don't have sidewalks to shovel.

Willow mentioned that there were many young families in the neighborhood and that some were building additions to their homes so they could stay in the neighborhood.

Deborah said that when her family first moved here, they were the only ones on the street with kids.

Willow asked about Kim's grocer.

Deborah said that theft had been high at Kim's

Jack asked why there was a need for a grocery store there when others existed close by.

Nancy said that the owners of Market Street Market may be able to provide some insight into small grocery stores.

Jack said that the hotel could attract more patrons to a grocery store.

Deborah talked about the Mayo family that used to own a large portion of the neighborhood. She added that the neighborhood was annexed in 1954.

Jean shared some more concerns over parking.

Nancy added that there is a want to keep the neighborhood feeling, a sense of place.

Deborah said that realtor once called because she her home is on a large lot and wanted to buy it and put town homes on it. She said that she didn't want to sell her property and that she wouldn't do that to her neighbors.

Jean added that people used to buy in and stay but now people are buying so they can rent out per bedroom and make a profit.

Nancy added that the townhomes on Madison used to be rented by families but now they were rented by the bedroom, and young families can't afford them now.

Jack wanted to look into policy to deter too many renters and to know more about housing rules, policies, and laws.

Jean said that neighbors were having to defend the neighborhood and that the City wasn't doing anything to help.

Deborah said that as density increases, more cars are parking on the street and it can be difficult to get trash cans to the street because there is no place to put them.

Nancy asked if anyone used the bus.

Discussion turned to what the tipping point would be for people to leave the neighborhood.

Jack said for him it would be too many renters

Deborah said it would be if the crime rate returned to what it was when she moved in, they would leave. She added that she believes the Islamic Center has had a calming effect on the neighborhood and they hold a lot of community events.

Jean said she would leave if she could move to the other side of the street.